

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend the claims as set forth hereinafter.

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of concentrating and purifying a ~~target entity~~ nucleic acid in a liquid sample, said method comprising contacting said liquid sample having a volume and comprising a solvent with a superabsorbent polymer or a superabsorptive composite material to absorb at least a portion of the sample by said polymer or composite material, wherein, upon said contacting, the solvent is more efficiently sorbed than the nucleic acid and the sample is concentrated.
2. (Original) The method according to claim 1 where the target entity is dissolved in the sample.
3. (Original) The method according to claim 2 where the sample contains additional dissolved compounds other than the target entity.
4. (Cancelled)
5. (Currently Amended) The method according to ~~claim 4~~ claim 1, further comprising absorbing the further dissolved compounds in said sample with the superabsorbent polymer or the superabsorbing composite material.
6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) The method according to ~~claim 4~~ claim 1, wherein the solvent is a hydrophilic solvent, preferably water or a mixture of water and a water miscible solvent.
8. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising separating the target entity from the superabsorbing polymers or superabsorbing composite materials, wherein said superabsorbing polymers or superabsorbing composite materials are swollen.
9. (Cancelled)
10. (Cancelled)
11. (Cancelled)
12. (Cancelled)
13. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~claim 12~~ claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid is single-stranded or double-stranded DNA or RNA, or a combination thereof, preferably genomic, viral or plasmid DNA, cDNAs, PCR products or viral RNA.
14. (Cancelled)
15. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 1, 3, 5 or 8, wherein the superabsorbing polymer comprising comprises polymerized vinylic monomers and anionic, cationic and/or zwitterionic monomers.
16. (Currently Amended) The ~~superabsorbing polymer~~ method of claim 15, wherein said vinylic monomers are acrylic monomers, acrylic acid or methacrylic acid derivatives, or mixtures thereof.

17. (Currently Amended) The ~~superabsorbing polymer~~ method of claim 16, wherein said acrylic acid and/or methacrylic acid derivatives are amides and/or esters thereof.
18. (Currently Amended) The ~~superabsorbing polymer~~ method of ~~claim 15~~ claim 16, wherein said polymer is a co-polymer comprising polymerized ionized or ionizable acrylic monomers.
19. (Currently Amended) The ~~superabsorbing polymer~~ method of claim 18, wherein said ionized or ionizable acrylic monomers are present in concentrations of 0.1 – 100% of the total monomers.
20. (Currently Amended) The ~~superabsorbing polymer~~ method of ~~claim 15~~ claim 16, wherein said polymer comprises polymerized acrylate, 3-(methacryloylamino) propyl trimethylammonium chloride and/or [3-(methacryloylamino)propyl]dimethyl (3-sulfopropyl) ammonium hydroxide.
21. (Currently Amended) The ~~superabsorbing polymer~~ method of claim 15, wherein said polymer is crosslinked, preferably with a crosslinking degree of 0.0001-10 %, further preferred with a crosslinking degree of 0.01 – 1 %.
22. (Currently Amended) The ~~superabsorbing polymer~~ method of claim 15, wherein said polymer further ~~comprising~~ comprises a sorbent dispersed in said polymer.
23. (Currently Amended) The ~~superabsorbing polymer~~ method of claim 15, wherein said polymer undergoes swelling upon contact with water or an aqueous solution.

24. (Currently Amended) ~~A powder comprising the superabsorbing polymer~~ The method of claim 15, wherein said superabsorbing polymer is a powder.
25. (Currently Amended) ~~A bead comprising the superabsorbing polymer~~ The method of claim 15, wherein said superabsorbing polymer is comprised in a bead preferably with a diameter in the range of 0.001-10 mm, more preferably with a diameter in the range of 0.1 – 4 mm.
26. (Currently Amended) ~~A surface coating comprising the superabsorbing polymer~~ The method of claim 15, wherein said superabsorbing polymer is comprised in a surface coating.
27. (Cancelled)
28. (Currently Amended) ~~The device of claim 27, further comprising~~ The method according to claim 15, wherein the superabsorbing polymer is comprised in a container selected from the group consisting of a sample tube, a centrifuge tube, a pipette tip, a column, a syringe and a microtiter plate.
29. (Currently Amended) ~~The device of claim 28~~ The method according to claim 15, wherein said superabsorbing polymer is filled into, bound to, or polymerized onto said container.
30. (Cancelled)
31. (Cancelled)
32. (Cancelled)
33. (New) A method of concentrating and purifying a nucleic acid in a liquid sample comprising

contacting said liquid sample having a volume and comprising a solvent with a superabsorbent polymer or a superabsorptive composite material to absorb at least a portion of the sample by said polymer or composite material, wherein said polymer or composite material sorbs water or hydrophilic liquids as well as low molecular weight material and wherein, upon said contacting, the solvent is more efficiently sorbed than the nucleic acid and the sample is concentrated.

34. (New) The method of claim 18, wherein said acrylic acid and/or methacrylic acid derivatives are amides and/or esters thereof.